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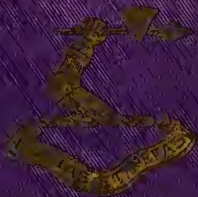
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LAYS OF
FAITH AND LOVE.

T. TODD-POTTS, LL.M. D.





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LAYS OF FAITH AND LOVE.

BY
T. TODD-POTTS, Litt. D.

*"Read from some humble poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the cloud of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start."*

LONGFELLOW.

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Gorleston-on-Sea :
T. TODD-POTTS,
Author-Publisher.

CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
A FAREWELL TO THE OLD YEAR AND A WELCOME TO THE NEW ONE - - - - -	I
THE AGONY - - - - -	5
PRETTY MOUNTAIN DAISY - - - - -	11
THE BREATH OF SPRING - - - - -	8
TO A CHILD - - - - -	12
THE FORSAKEN ONE - - - - -	14
GORLESTON CHURCH TOWER SPEAKS - - - - -	16
YELLOW LEAVES - - - - -	17
THE STRUGGLES OF LIFE - - - - -	21
GRAZIELLA'S DYING FAREWELL - - - - -	24
THE LAST APPEAL - - - - -	28
OF WHAT I THINK - - - - -	30
TO LOWESTOFT - - - - -	32
DON RAMIRO - - - - -	33
OH! TOUCH IT NOT - - - - -	40
AN OFT-TOLD TALE - - - - -	42
DESPAIR - - - - -	45
VISIONS - - - - -	47
TO THE LADY OF MY HEART - - - - -	49
THE SONG OF LOVE - - - - -	51
EVENING PRAYER - - - - -	53

PREFACE.

IN publishing this little volume, I feel it necessary to claim the kind indulgence of the reader for these unpretending poems, which were in the first instance so essentially written for my own friends. I am well aware that they can, critically speaking, boast of no poetic merit, and only be of value to those kindred spirits that may have thrilled to the same emotions, and may find in these verses an echo of their own feelings and impressions. If a glance into my little book can brighten an hour of weariness, or soothe a moment of suffering; if but one fainting heart can find in its pages a word of comfort or encouragement, then indeed will my aim be attained and God's blessing rest on these simple strains !

T. TODD-POTTS, LITT. D.

GORLESTON,

February, 1909.

“The Lays of Faith and Love,” as graciously accepted by H.M. the King, and under the distinguished patronage of H.M. the Queen, His late Majesty King Oscar of Sweden, K G., H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, K.G., and over fifty Bishops.

An Anthology, or Nosegay, culled from unasked opinions and expressions of appreciation from Bishops, Clergy, etc.

The ex-Archbishop of York—

“You very lightly speak of your poems as unpretending, but they are by no means without power, and I hope they may bring comfort to not a few who may find them in their homes.”

The Archbishop of Armagh—

“My good wishes.”

The Archbishop of Dublin—

“I have read your poems with interest; they are touching and fine.”

The Bishop of Durham—

“I like your sweet verses much. I trust that even in these days, when verse is not so much sought for as it was, you may find many purchasers.”

The Bishop of Norwich—

“ I wish you every success in your enterprise.”

The Duke of Argyle, K.G.—

“ Many thanks for letting me see your pleasant poems.”

**The Dean of Hereford (The Very Rev. and Hon.
J. Wentworth Leigh)—**

“ It may interest you to know that I read your little book with much gratification and, I hope, profit.”

**The Hon. Sir John Cockburn, K.C.M.G. (late
Minister of Education for S. Australia).—**

“ I congratulate you.”

TO THE MEMORY OF HIS MAJESTY
KING OSCAR OF SWEDEN.

In grateful remembrance of his kind encouragement in my early literary work, this poem is dedicated by the Author, and published with the gracious permission of His Majesty King Gustaf of Sweden.

A KING who own'd a hero's soul
The Swedish nation mourn,
For he has reached that final goal
Where no earthly crown is worn.

Poet and soldier, friend and King,
Our praises ne'er will cease ;
In Swedish song thy name will ring
As the Champion of Peace.

Britons with Swedes to-day unite
In a prayer to God above,
For Oscar who used his earthly might
In the cause of Peace and Love.

A FAREWELL TO THE OLD YEAR AND
A WELCOME TO THE NEW ONE.

THE last day of the year . . . ! how much is in
these words enshrined,
Leaving a still and solemn hush upon the trembling
mind,
As with a feeling, half of hope and half of boding
fear,
We hail, in its advancing course, the newly-
opening year !

And thou ! what art thou bearing hence on thy
retiring waves,
Thou passing year, that led'st us on still nearer
to our graves—
Still nearer to our final rest, our day of victory,
When months and years are all swept by in
Life's eternity ?

What shipwrecked hopes, what vain desires for
ever unfulfilled,
What ne'er-to-be-forgotten dreams not e'en by
sorrow stilled,

What cravings for a happiness which never may
be ours,

On which we fix our bosom's thoughts and bend
our spirit's powers ?

What glimpses of a future bright arising on the
soul,

In soft fantastic hues and forms too mighty to
control,

Drawing the heart still further on, in that fair
land of dreams,

Where what we love, our love returns, and fond
affection beams !

What voiceless yearnings gushing forth from the
deep spirit's store,

And doomed to find in kindred hearts a sweet
response no more !

What cruel crushings of the heart borne in
retiring woe,

And hiding from the scornful world the wounded
feelings glow !

What young eyes opened painfully to Life's
realities,

And writhing 'neath the aching sense of burd'ning
memories,

What breaking of the dearest ties that human
heart may know,
Are borne on thy last solemn knell, so mournful,
sad and low !

What dost thou bear us on thy wings, thou just-
beginning year,
And what prophetic badge is thine? a smile?
a sigh? a tear?
Shedding a brightness on our life? or dimly
shadowing o'er
The coming days of wintry void for weary hearts
in store?

What message bearest thou to my heart, the
feverish, hope-o'er-fraught,
The struggling, fluttering soul, not e'en by dis-
appointment taught,
For ever striving to be free, to burst its earthly
chain,
Which checks its kindling lightning flight and
high aspirings vain !

Whate'er thy task, oh ! be it blessed by Him who
knows my need,
Whose pitying hand with love sustains the fragile
drooping reed !

And if, in thy fleet course, my soul by suffering
must be taught

To lay aside its burning dreams with unbelief
o'er-fraught ;

To turn my too-confiding trust from idols made of
clay,

Which never give us back the love we pour on
them away !

Wasting on frail mortality the noble powers
divine ;

More fitly laid, O God of Love, upon Thy holy
shrine !

Oh ! then indeed in Life's record thy mem'ry will
be blest,

And long remembered in the heart—the tranquil
home of rest !

Bright'ning with gleams of heavenly light the
unknown futurity,

And training our aspiring souls for immortality !

THE AGONY.

ON the steep hill of Calvary the heavy cross He
bore,
And from His bruised and trembling head blood
gushed at every pore ;
But still He meekly drank the cup prepared by
human sin,
And bowed to suffering and shame His murd'ers'
lives to win,
O Son of God, who bled'st for us ! the Father's
only Child,
We crowned Thy holy head with thorns, Thou
Victim undefiled.

We bound Thee to th' accursed tree, we pierced
Thy hands and feet ;
We gave Thee vinegar and gall Thy sufferings
to complete ;
We mocked Thy work of love divine, and bade
Thee scornfully,
“ If Thine the power and might of God, come
down and make Thee free.”

But Thou, whose ev'ry thought was love, e'en
at the approach of death,
Thou prayd'st for them who brought Thee there
with Thy last fainting breath.

O Saviour! perfect in Thy life of suff'ring and
of woe,
And holy in the agony of that last hour below—
Thou who with dying lips bestowed a pardon
bought by Thee,
Which sounded to the sinner's ears as heavenly
melody!
Thine is the power to break the chain which
binds my heart to sin;
Thine are the words of peace and love to end
the strife within.

Or is it that I will not hear when Jesus calls
above,
And to the husks of earth I cling with too much
human love?
And sadly my young heart rebels against the
chast'ning rod,
Though sent as messenger of grace to lead me to
my God;
I know not, Father, what it is that keeps my heart
from Thee,
But well I know 'tis vain to hope far from Thy
face to flee.

The thorny crown, the heavy cross, the vinegar
and gall,
For me these pangs and woes were borne, for me
these suff'rings all ;
And I, for whom that blood was shed, that holy
head reviled—
Should I refuse to bow me down as a repentant
child ;
And clinging to Thy gracious feet, bedewing them
with tears,
Implore a pardon for my sins, soothing my heart's
deep fears.

O Jesus ! let Thy yoke be mine, and bend this
stubborn heart,
As Mary, to sit meekly down and choose the
better part.
For happy they whom Thou wilt guide to seek
the narrow way,
And bright will be, when night is past, their
glorious dawn of day ;
Stretch out Thy hand of love, dear Lord, and
bid the weary come,
To find beneath Thy shelt'ring wing a refuge
and a home.

THE BREATH OF SPRING.

WHAT music wak'st thou in the heart, thou fitful
breeze of spring !

What mighty spells and yearnings deep are borne
upon thy wing !

What hidden memories of the past, long buried
in the heart,

Are called again to life by thee as by a magic art !

Away ! away ! thou rushing voice ! within our
bosom-cells

Too deep an answer to thy tones wildly mysterious
dwells !

Bright buds and flowers and verdant leaves are
waving in the breeze,

The wood-doves' plaintive, thrilling notes break
from the forest trees,

And many scents and odours sweet, burst from a
lowly flower,

Are strewn upon the passing gale, her bosom's
priceless dower,

And rich soft swells, all deep with love and
passion's ardent glow,
From little nests, by verdure kind, in sudden
gushes flow.

Oh! thou hast voices, lovely Spring; which
strike the inmost soul
With something too divinely strange—beyond the
heart's control!
With foretastes of a melody which once shall
greet our ears,
When ended is the weary strife, when dried the
burning tears!
The rippling stream, the sighing breeze, are
fraught with myst'ries deep,
Which wake the cords of sympathy, within our
breasts asleep.

And still thou hast no power, O Spring, to bring
us back again
The crushed affections, vanished hopes, our souls
must mourn in vain;
Thou can'st not from the mighty Past recall the
days gone by
In calm forgetfulness of grief, which seemed too
bright to fly,

Of which, if by our heart's warm blood one hour
we might ensure,

'Twould not be bought too dear by aught our
bosoms could endure.

Away then! do not haunt us still with what may
ne'er be ours!

We may not waste on such vain dreams our
soul's immortal powers!

For a higher and a nobler aim thy warning voice
was sent,

With many a message of God's love and gracious
promise blent,

To waft our thoughts and yearnings deep far
through the clouds above,

To brighter realms, unknown to change, th' abodes
of endless love.

PRETTY MOUNTAIN DAISY.

PRETTY little Girlie,
With beauty oh ! so rare,
Won't you wander with me
In the morning air ?
Pretty Mountain Daisy,
Drinking heavenly dew,
Tell my little sweetheart
That my love is true.

Then he took the Daisy,
Placed it near her heart ;
Girlie she will never
From that Daisy part.
Pretty Mountain Daisy,
With no more ado,
Told his little sweetheart
That his love was true.

TO A CHILD.

CHILD ! within whose laughing eyes
 Such a world of gladness lies,
 Bright'ning with their sparkling rays
 All that meets their radiant gaze,
 Meekly joyous, gently bright,
 With their heaven-reflected light,
 Few are fair and loved as thou :
 May God bless that sunny brow !

Tell me, little fairy Queen,
 Where thy roving steps have been.
 Hast thou trod the lonesome wood
 Where the gentle ring-doves brood,
 Where the modest violets grow,
 Hiding from the sun's rich glow—
 And upon the rippling stream
 The pale water-lilies gleam ?

Hast thou challenged in thy glee
 Every passing busy bee ?
 Or the roving butterfly
 Whose bright wings can soar so high ?

As thy airy figure passed,
Flitting by so wondrous fast,
Have not bird and stream and flower
Felt thy bright and glad'ning power ?

Child ! methinks an angel band
Leads thee gently by the hand,
With their mighty pinions spread
Round thy young and beauteous head ;
With their glances soft and kind
Shielding thee from aught of woe,
Which thy infant years might know !

Bright one ! many a pray'rful sigh
Pleads for thee when none are nigh,
That thy fair and tender form
Ne'er may bend 'neath passion's storm,
Nor thy clear and truthful brow
To the world's cold influence bow !
May the Saviour undefiled
Bless and keep thee pure, my child !

THE FORSAKEN ONE.

HAST thou ever dreamed, thou lone one, that one
heart might throb for thee—

One true heart by nothing daunted, that might
make its choice less free ?

Always with thee, always near thee, as thy
guardian on the way,

Dreaming of thee in its slumbers, watching o'er
thee in the day ?

Trusting, while all others chide thee, to the voice
of love within,

Which proclaims thee best and dearest, worth the
noblest heart to win !

Tell me not in silent language through those
touching eyes of thine,

Which have power intense to move me when in
tearful light they shine—

Tell me not 'twere vain to love thee, whom no
others dare to love,

Who has none to share her sorrows but her only
Friend above ;

Spare me, oh ! the pang to see thee, heart-sick
anxious, and forlorn,
Striving to bear unprotected all the world's un-
feeling scorn !

Let me love thee, sad and wearied, and, forsaken
as thou art,
Let me raise thy broken tendrils to this strong,
protecting heart ;
Let me chase the world's dark image from the
soul which I despised,
But by me, through suffering chastened, doubly
and more deeply prized,
And in my deep love forgetting every harsh and
cruel slight,
May thy heart, to mine united, know no fond
affections' blight !

GORLESTON CHURCH TOWER SPEAKS.

To Norman hands I owe my stand,
 But they so long have passed away,
 Those conquerors of the Angles' land,
 That I alone their powers display.

I saw the sturdy sailor band,
 In the third King Edward's reign,
 To Crecy sail—the sight was grand—
 They helped to win that great campaign.

Then still another fleet set sail,
 'Twas Good Queen Bess sat on the throne ;
 To fight for Church and country they
 Left all their homes without a moan.

Oh ! shame I hardly dare to tell
 What I saw Cromwell's rebel band
 Do to the Church we love so well,
 But I've outlived his evil hand.

At last I see the Catholic creed
 Once more restored as I shall be ;
 *To the Vicar who has done this deed,
 Give honour all from land and sea.

* The Vicar of Gorleston, the Rev. Forbes Phillips (Athol Forbes), the well-known author.

YELLOW LEAVES.

OH seared and withered leaflets ! so sadly strewn
around,
All shrivelled and decaying upon the chilly
ground,
So mournfully and wildly ye seek your destined
tomb,
As if 'twere vain to linger since ye have lost your
bloom :
Your freshness has departed, your easy task is
done,
And with the summer glory, ye die, while we
live on !
Ye have a voice, ye sad ones ! ye have a touching
voice
Which wakes no answering echoes in bosoms
which rejoice,
But ye touch the key of suff'ring in many a
sinking heart
From which joy's gladsome dreamings with sunny
youth depart ;
And your dirge like tones of sadness as ye rush
swiftly by
Call from the soul's deep yearnings a sorrowful
reply.

Oh ! tell me, gentle mourners ! the burden of your
song,
As one by one ye follow your sister's hopeless
throng :
For I would learn a lesson from every falling leaf,
And muse upon their fading, not as a thought of
grief,
But as a voice of warning which speaks of life's
decay,
And teaches us, with wisdom, to count each
fleeting day !

Oh ! pity us not, gentle creatures of earth,
For we pass not away in the season of mirth,
And we leave not the sunshine and glory of May
To sink in th' embrace of an early decay !

While the earth was all bright and the sky all
serene,
And sweet Nature was decked as a bride or a
queen,
We were fairest of all that enchanted the eye,
And we thought not so soon we should wither and
die !

Oh ! 'twas glorious to bask in the sun's mellow
ray,
And to dance in the breeze which around us did
play ;

And 'twas sweeter to hide 'neath our shadowy
green,
The frail nest which so oft love's sweet dwelling
had been !

It were hard to depart from this world of delight,
And to die in the midst of its beauty and light ;
But the voice which has called us away to our
rest
Bears a summons all welcome, a message all
blest !

While ye, children of earth, must dread winter's
stern reign,
We are sleeping, secure from all danger and pain ;
We have lived and have bloomed thro' the long
summer day,
But from winter's dread power we hasten away !

The task is achieved which 'twas ours to perform,
And God calls us away from the frost and the
storm.

Thus fear not, thou trembler ! condemned still to
roam :

Thy Saviour knows best when to summon thee
home !

Oh ! sweet has been thy lesson, thou fragile
summer leaf,
And to the heart o'erburdened its words have
brought relief,
For they speak of God, who made thee so beautiful
and bright,
Decked with hope's vernal colours to cheer our
bounded sight ;
And it bids me trust my future to the hands of
Him above,
Who never will deny me the sunshine of His love !

And therefore, child of autumn ! thou hast not
come in vain,
And I will keep thee near me till Spring returns
again ;
And every with'ring leaflet shall bear the self-same
tale,
Till I myself resemble a withered flower so pale,
And I lay me down, o'erwearied, to rest within the
tomb
Till the hour of my awaking 'midst heaven's
immortal bloom !

THE STRUGGLES OF LIFE.

MOURNFUL, and weary of life and its dreams,
Of brooding o'er all that it is and it seems,
Of trusting to hopes which were born to decay,
In their bloom and their freshness all passing
away,

When I turn to this heart which is throbbing with
pain,

I hear naught but one echo—in vain ! oh, in vain !

Oh heart full of mystery, of anguish and fear !
Was that voice of deep suff'ring which thrilled on
mine ear—

Was it born of thy struggles, thy tempests, thy
woes,

Which follow like phantoms denying repose ?

Thou hast touched in thy wildness the keynote of
pain,

Which has rung as the death-knell of hope through
the brain !

Can it be that these hopes, and these dreams, and
this trust

Should be fostered awhile and then trampled and
crushed ?

That this sunshine of life, which oft gladdens my
dreams,

Has in truth naught on me to bestow of its
gleams ?

That this heart, which has felt all its wants and its
power,

Should receive but a blank and a void for its
dower ?

Can it be that this earth, which I once deemed so
fair,

Bears but blight on its bosom and grief in its
air ?

That the sun, and the flowers, and the song of
the bird

Were but sweet when the soul of my childhood
they stirred ;

That their beauty and brightness have faded
away

With the halo which once used around them to
play ?

I could weep for my childhood, its gladness and
mirth,

With its freshness of feeling now crushed to the
earth ;

With the power of its hopes, and its visions of joy,
Which no cloud, though it threatened, could dim
or destroy ;

With its simple repose, and its unshaken trust,
Which the struggles of life have laid low in the
dust.

GRAZIELLA'S DYING FAREWELL.*

HAST thou forgot me in thy far-off dwelling ?

Hast thou forgot those thrilling days of yore
When before thee this heart, with anguish
swelling,

Bowed wildly down, all trembling, to adore—
When I forgot the pride of woman's feeling
Which shrinks to love, where love is all in
vain,

And at thy feet in phrènsied suff'ring kneeling,
My soul's deep cry burst forth with madd'ning
pain ?

'Tis sad to love thee with such fearful power !

Such creature worship is but cause for woe.
I felt my doom rush on me in that hour ;

The hand I loved must deal the heaviest blow !
I knew ev'n then, when thy strong spirit, shaken
By passion's voice, had caught the answering
tone,

That once, alas ! neglected and forsaken,
This weary heart should meet its fate alone.

* For the story of Graziella, see De Lamartine, "Memoirs of my Youth."

I hear it still—the music sweetly flowing
From those bright lips which knew the soothing
spell ;
I see thine eyes my downcast glances wooing,
While on my cheek the burning tear-drops fell,
I feel thine arm still gently round me twining,
While my faint head was sheltered on thy
breast,
And softly there, as a fond child reclining,
I felt, alas ! too rapturously blest !

Oh, haunt me not ! my heart is weak and broken ;
I cannot bear those memories of the past !
Each word by thee in former kindness spoken
Sounds in my soul as a funeral blast ;
If I could die to spare thee pain and anguish,
How joyfully 'twere done for thee, mine own !
But far from thee to sicken and to languish,
This doom, God knows, I cannot bear alone !

Thine eye's deep fervour, with its light of gladness,
So sweetly wielding an entrancing power ;
Thy chiselled face, pensive, with naught of sadness,
Return upon me in this last dread hour !
I cannot die with this bright vision beaming
With haunting fondness o'er my memory's sight :
It dims the radiance which is softly streaming
O'er my worn spirit from the showers of light !] c

Thou hast not been all that my heart had deemed
thee,

Thou hast not loved so faithfully as I ;
Thou wouldst not then so lightly have esteemed
me,

And left me thus in lonely grief to die !
And yet my soul clings to thee, wildly yearning,
My life's bright idol ! even in death most dear,
And while within the feverish pain is burning,
I bless thee still, and vainly call thee near !

A few short days will end this tale of sorrow,
And lay me low beneath the grassy sod.
If this sad life knew not a better morrow,
Well might my heart deny a pitying God !
But all is well, since those bright dreams of
gladness,
Crushed in their bloom, have weaned my thoughts
from life,
And pard'ning mercy through the chast'ning
sadness
Points to those realms where ends our earthly
strife !

I would not, dearest ! in this solemn hour,
That thou should'st think aught bitter filled my
heart ;
For this deep love, touched by a hallowing power,
Shall ne'er from thee, not e'en through death,
depart !

For all thou gav'st me of thy soul's deep treasure,
For all the joy that was so shortly mine !
Though I die lonely whilst thou liv'st in pleasure,
May'st thou receive a blessing all divine !

Then fare thee well, beloved ! and ne'er forsaken ;
In life's last hour this heart is still thine own !
And by the intenseness of its passion shaken,
Bursts the frail bonds, too weak and powerless
grown !

My spirit freed from its vain load of sorrow,
Around thy path with fearless love shall dwell,
Until for thee, too, dawn that happier morrow,
Which knows not th' anguish of this earth's
farewell !

THE LAST APPEAL.

When I am numbered with the dead,
Then thou shalt love me ;
When silently thy foot shall tread
The turf above me ;
When from the tomb a still small voice
Shall soothe thy sorrow,
Bidding thee hopefully rejoice
In life's to-morrow.

When I am gently laid to rest,
So worn and weary,
Then shall the void in thy sad breast
Be deep and dreary.
And often in the night's deep gloom
Thou 'lt feel the yearning
For him who dwells within the tomb,
No more returning.

While I am living at thy side
Striving for gladness,
The love which I must learn to hide
Brings naught but sadness.
I know thy heart is not for me
Thou canst not love me.
God knows I only dream of thee
As far above me !

But when my voice and step depart
From thine lone dwelling,
And thoughts of anguish fill my heart,
'Gainst life rebelling ;
When thou shalt miss the fond caress
And gentle soothing,
With words of sweetest tenderness
Life's pathway smoothing :

Then come thou to the peaceful spot
Where I am sleeping,
For there the love which slumbereth not
Its watch is keeping ;
And He whose smiles in sorrow shine
Will bring thee healing,
E'en by the loss of love as mine,—
His own revealing.

OF WHAT I THINK.

OF what I think ? I think of life's bright morning,
When yet so calm this youthful heart did beat,
When hope's first beams this earthly vale adorning,
As a sweet sunshine danced before my feet ;
When to each thought the wings of power were
given,
And all life's roses seemed to speak of heaven.

Oh ! then I lingered in the evening hour,
Hearing no storm or rain, by naught distressed,
Neath the small window decked by many a flower,
Where I had seen a passing shadow rest.
How sweet it was, while in my rose-bush hiding,
To meet her eye, so full of gentle chiding !

While from the lily's cup sweet scents were flowing,
Methought a silent prayer was borne on high,
And my rapt soul, with love and fervour glowing,
Joined in the hymn ascending to the sky ;
I heard sweet songs in the wave's cadence swelling,
And my heart answered, on their import dwelling.

Yes ! I was purer in my soul's believing ;
I trusted more, and dreamed less of deceit ;
With proud concern their misery relieving,
The struggling multitude my soul could meet
And I could scorn the petty cares and toiling,
In this dark world so many heart-dreams foiling.

But now, alas ! I've seen and known. With sorrow
I've found the bud turned ashes in my hand ;
Each dream is false, each promise of to-morrow
Gives less of joys which yet our hearts demand !
And reaching manhood, all I won for striving
Were a few songs and longings still reviving !

And that bright time when I was idly musing,
And deemed this world so very wide and fair,
Its hopes have fled, their spells on air diffusing,
And I have half forgotten what they were.
But oft, when in my room the moon comes stealing,
The face returns, as in a dream revealing.

TO LOWESTOFT, QUEEN OF THE
EAST COAST.

THE TOWN OF MY BIRTH.

OH ! I love you dearly,
Town that gave me birth ;
You are very truly
Unconscious of your worth.

Delightful sweet sea breezes,
Wafted on the air,
Bring to every sufferer
Health not gained elsewhere

Oh ! you earthly paradise,
A Queen we all adore,
Many for health would sacrifice
Half their earthly store.

Over thirty years ago
I loved you with delight ;
Oh ! lovely Suffolk Queen,
I am still your knight.

DON RAMIRO.

A BALLAD.

DONNA CLARA ! Donna Clara !

Canst thou, then, so soon forget ?
Has thy heart to death condemned me
Without pity or regret ?

Donna Clara ! Donna Clara !

Lovely is this world, forsooth !
Mournful must it be to leave it
In the springtime of our youth.

Donna Clara ! whom to-morrow

Don Fernando calls his own,
Wilt thou ask me to thy wedding
For the sake of days long flown ?

Don Ramiro ! Don Ramiro !

Spare me, oh ! these words of pain,
For, against our fate rebelling,
We would strive, alas ! in vain.

Don Ramiro ! child of glory !
Thou whose sword of deathless fame,
With the Moslem's life-blood dripping,
Made them shudder at thy name.

Nobles' task is now before thee,
Nobles' victory may be thine ;
Come, I sue thee to my wedding,
And my warmest thanks are thine.

Donna Clara ! Donna Clara !
I shall come—thy pleadings cease ;
At the bridal dance I'll meet thee—
Hear me swear it ! . . . Sleep in peace !

As he spoke she closed the window,
But Ramiro lingered yet,
Till at last the youth departed,
Bowed by sorrow and regret.

Night was spent, and brightly smiling
Dawned the glorious summer day ;
In Toledo's flowery gardens
Sweetly did the breezes play.

Stately buildings, sun-illumined,
Gleamed and glittered in the air,
While the palace-dome seemed bathing
In the flood of sunbeams fair.

Wafted on the summer breezes
Chime on chime the joy-bells ring,
While within the holy minster
Crowds of gazers pray and sing.

By the porch and in the entry
Multitudes are swayed along,
And each moment swells the number
Of the bold and curious throng.

Noble knights and lovely maidens
Kneel around the wedded pair ;
Ne'er was bridal train so gorgeous,
Ne'er were bridesmaids half so fair.

Now the marriage rites are ended,
And the bridegroom, glad and proud,
Leads his bride, so sweet and blushing,
Through the rapt admiring crowd.

To the bridegroom's sumptuous palace
All the bridal train repairs ;
In the feasting and rejoicing
Half Toledo gladly shares.

Banquets, tournaments, and music—
Till the fleeting hours of day ;
Evening comes with new-born pleasures,
Thrilling dance and merry play.

In the festive hall assembled
Knights and damsels, young and bright,
Sport and dance in jewelled dresses,
Sparkling in the floods of light.

On a raised seat of velvet
Sit the newly-married pair ;
Donna Clara, Don Fernando
Jest and laugh with gladsome air.

All is joy and love and radiance
As the dazzling couples pass,
While the trumpet's notes are sounding
Mingled with the drum's deep bass.

"Tell me, sweetest !" quoth the bridegroom
With a blank, astonished look,
"Why so oft thy glance is roving
To that shadowy window nook ?"

"Seest thou not at that low casement
Yon proud form so black and tall ?"
Quoth Fernando : "Child ! thou dreamest ;
'Tis a shadow on the wall."

But the sable form approaches ;
As he greets her, bending low,
Clara knows 'tis Don Ramiro,
And her cheeks with blushes glow.

Wildly are the dancers whirling,
Still unwearied as before ;
Lightly tripping, gaily swinging,
Smiling couples tread the floor.

Yes, I follow, Don Ramiro !
For I love the dance so gay ;
But thy mantle, dark and flowing,
Is no dress for bridal day.

Cold are Don Ramiro's glances,
And his touch is strange and chill,
As with hollow voice he whispers,
"Thou hast asked me—'tis thy will !"

And they fly and bound together
Through the moving human mass,
To the trumpet's stirring music
And the drum's unchanging bass.

"Thou art pale as ne'er I saw thee !"
Murmurs Clara, rapt and still ;
Strangely sounds Ramiro's answer :
"Thou hast asked me—'tis thy will !"

Brightly gleam the flickering tapers,
While the whirling couples pass,
Dancing to the trumpet's music,
To the drum's unchanging bass.

"Death-like feels thy hand," cries Clara
Fearful thoughts her bosom fill ;
But he answers, wildly dancing :
"Thou hast asked me—'tis thy will."

Festive music, still inviting,
Bids the young be glad and gay,
Bounding, whirling, floating, swinging
To the music's stirring play.

"Leave me! let me go, Ramiro!"
Shrieks the bride with fear oppressed ;
But he holds her, pale and swooning,
To his cold and pulseless breast.

"In God's name I bid thee leave me!"
As she speaks that holy name
Don Ramiro's form has vanished
In the air from which it came!

In her veins the blood seems frozen,
Wildly does she gaze around ;
Mighty shadows gather o'er her,
And she sinks upon the ground.

As rememb'rance is returning
To her weak and weary head,
Speechless wonder overwhelms her,
And she deems her senses fled.

For she still sits near Fernando,
And has never stirred from thence ;
All has been a hideous vision,
Ghastly dream with power intense.

“ Tell me, why so pale and fluttering ? ”
Asks the bridegroom tenderly ;
“ And Ramiro ? ” falters Clara,
Trembling still his form to see.

And the bridegroom’s brow o’ershadows,
While his voice sounds stern and deep :
“ Don Ramiro has been murdered
This fair morning in his sleep ! ”

From the German of “ Heine.”

OH! TOUCH IT NOT!

WHEN softly glows a heart with love,
Oh, touch it not ! thy touch were death.
The spark thus kindled from on high
Must not be quenched by mortal breath.

If in this world a single spot
Be hallowed by a sacred feeling,
'Tis where within a human breast
Young love has blushed its first revealing.

Oh ! fling no shade on that bright dream,
Where all is budding wondrous fair ;
Ye know not what a heavenly hope
Can thus be changed to mute despair !

So many a strong, high heart is broken
Because its love was wrenched away ;
And those who braved life's bitt'rest anguish
Died when they found their idol clay.

And others closed their bleeding bosom
To every tone but pleasure's call,
And by the world's dust wildly blinded,
They lost their hope, their aim, their all !

And then ye weep with self-upbraiding ;
But if your tears flowed even more,
Ye could not heal the rose-stalk broken,
Nor a dead heart to life restore !

AN OFT-TOLD TALE.

THEY said : " He loves thee not ; he mocks thee,
simple child ! "

And then she bowed her head, while sad and
hopeless tears

Coursed down her lily cheeks—anguish deep and
wild,

Oh, had she but repulsed those cruel doubts
and fears !

And when he came again, and found his loved
one cold,

Distressed by withering doubts, not smiling as
of old,

He shut his wounded heart, and scornful gaiety
feigned,

Shedding proud tears by night, when pitying
darkness reigned.

And in the midnight hour her guardian angel
came,

Whispering into her heart sweet words of calm
and peace :

" Fear not—his love is thine ; his heart is still
the same.

" Oh, be thou faithful too, and bid these
doubtings cease ! "

And he, too, heard a voice that bade his pride
beware :

“ Her heart is all thine own ; thou must forgive
and spare,

For is she not thy love, thy prized and beauteous
one ? ”

They met—their love was deep—but pride the
victory won.

And so they parted. . . . Thus dies the pale
altar-light

Beneath the minstrel-dome ; first fades the
trembling ray,

Then, flickering into life with radiance clear and
bright,

It sinks at last in gloom. Thus passed their
love away :

First wept o'er yearningly, and then it seemed
forgot,

As if it ne'er had been, and e'en remembered
not.

But sometimes in the night, when on their
pillowed beds,

The moon her pale sweet beams in chastened
radiance sheds,

They wake from a wild sleep with face bedewed
with tears ;

They dreamt—I know not what—a dream of love
and fears ;

And then the past returns full of upbraiding
grief,

And even the cry of woe is vain to bring relief.

For in that solemn hour, when all is hushed and
still,

The angel of Remorse enters their lonely
hearts ;

It speaks of love betrayed, and of a stubborn
will,

And of the parting pang whose sting no more
departs.

And now that hope is vain, how can they bear
to live

Thus desolate and one ? O God ! these two
forgive !

DESPAIR.

THERE is a voice within my breast,
A yearning, heart-sick tone,
Which would trouble even this long-sought
rest

With its ever-haunting moan.
It wails o'er youth's glad life laid low,
Its harp-strings rudely scattered,
Thrilling yet with a cry of woe
Ere its last sounds be shattered.

Life's dream is past—the conflict o'er—
My heart must now be strong ;
Thy coldness touches me no more :
It cannot torture long.
The days are past when I could live
Thus near thee, though forgot ;
If God can pity and forgive,
Live on, and miss me not.

And thou ! believe, remember not
That I have loved thee well ;
'Tis better this should be forgot
In the moment of farewell.

I'll nerve my tearless eyes to scorn
While gazing upon thee,
But maybe that before next morn
Thou'lt shed one tear for me !

The wind's sad notes come floating by
And sigh 'midst the long damp reeds ;
They will murmur o'er me as I lie
Where the river wavelet speeds :
A broken heart and a broken life,
Oh ! where should they rest in peace,
But where Death hath ended the weary
strife,
And the wicked from troubling cease.

VISIONS.

I'VE listened to thy songs, my bird !
Thy sweet tones all untaught,
Till many a memory softly stirred,
Has wrapt my soul in thought ;
And far away my musings fled
In dreamland bright and fair,
Where all are mine, the lost, the dead,
Restored and living there !

I seemed to lie in mossy shade,
Fanned by a gentle air,
Bright sunbeams dancing in the glade
And kissing flowerets fair ;
While from green boughs half hid from sight
Glad anthems seemed to swell,
As winged voices taking flight
In worlds of love to dwell.

And then methought between the trees
I saw sweet faces gleam ;
I knew them all—the lost ones these
Whose footsteps vanished seem.

But oft in retrospective hours
These visions float along,
Touching, not crushing, earthly flowers,
A white and beauteous throng.

They too are singing notes divine,
Their tones the foliage thrill,
And seem to make the spot a shrine
For worship deep and still ;
And o'er my listening heart has passed
God's whisper, soft and sweet :
Oh ! may I hear that to the last,
A child at Jesu's feet.

And now, my bird ! thy song has ceased,
And now my dream is fled,
But I can feel my faith increased
By converse with the dead.
Oh ! may those witnesses unseen
Stand between me and sin,
And, knowing what their strife has been,
May I like victory win.

TO THE LADY OF MY HEART.

My love is young, my love is fair—
Fair as the smiles of May ;
The rich curls of her auburn hair
Around her sweet face play.
The light within her dear brown eyes,
Those eyes so soft and kind,
Is cloudless as th' unchanging skies,
And guileless as her mind !

My love is simple as a child,
And merry as a bird ;
Her song's glad music sweet and wild
May all day long be heard !
As sunshine bringing joy and mirth,
So seems her presence bright ;
'Tis pleasant on this dim old earth
To see such fresh delight !

My love is true and white and pure
As a snowflake in the air ;
I know not what I might endure
If she was false as fair !

But sooner would the lily bend
Her proud stalk to the ground
Than would my beauty condescend
To smile on all around.

My love is lovely as the rose,
The wild rose all untrained,
Which in its own bright beauty grows,
By glance or touch unstained.
Through summer shine, through summer
shower,
Unconscious of her worth,
She blooms, my fair and chosen flower,
Sweetest of all on earth.

My love is all that love can be,
And oh ! I'll prize her well !
While she will bless my home for me,
My cottage in the dell ;
My heart is her's with fondest trust
Bent 'neath her soft control,
Until my frame returns to dust,
And God receives my soul.

THE SONG OF LOVE.

As if he were a nightingale,
Love sat in balmy bowers,
And poured his song o'er hill and vale,
A song of youth and flowers.

And as the music filled the air,
Sweet roses, night-arrayed,
Reopened all their leaflets fair,
With which the breezes played.

The brooklets ceased their babbling flow,
In rapture at the sound ;
The startled deer seemed loth to go
From that enchanted ground.

As lengthening shadows veiled the plain,
And all around lay hushed,
Those notes as soft as summer rain
From love's full bosom gushed.

While floating in the night along
The strain in beauty grew ;
Oh ! since that hour my every song
Re-echoes it anew !

EVENING PRAYER.

THE night is come, the day is spent,
With all its gifts and treasures lent,
And humbly at its close we pray,
O Father ! wipe its sins away !
How sweetly do Thy children feel
That Thou art with them whilst they kneel,
And that, in daily ill or pain,
Thy help is never sought in vain ;

If, midst the varying scenes of Earth,
Some days seem full of joys and mirth,
When life is bright and love is sweet,
And high our gladsome pulses beat ;
When all our hopes and dreams are fair,
And sunshine fills the balmy air :
Then teach us, Lord, to watch and pray,
Lest pleasure lead our hearts astray !

But if Thou send'st us days of pain,
When dearest hopes have all proved vain
When sweetest joys for which we yearned
Have in our hands to ashes turned ;

When warmest hearts seem all estranged,
And those we loved are lost or changed :
Then, Father, at the close of day,
Soothe Thou our anguish whilst we pray.

And give us thus to live for Thee
That, when at eve we bend the knee,
We each may say, with truthful word,
I and my house will serve the Lord
Amidst the smiles and tears of life,
Amidst the trouble and the strife,
Until, with pure and holy love,
We serve Him better still above.

THE END.



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